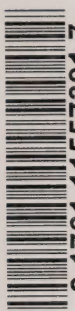


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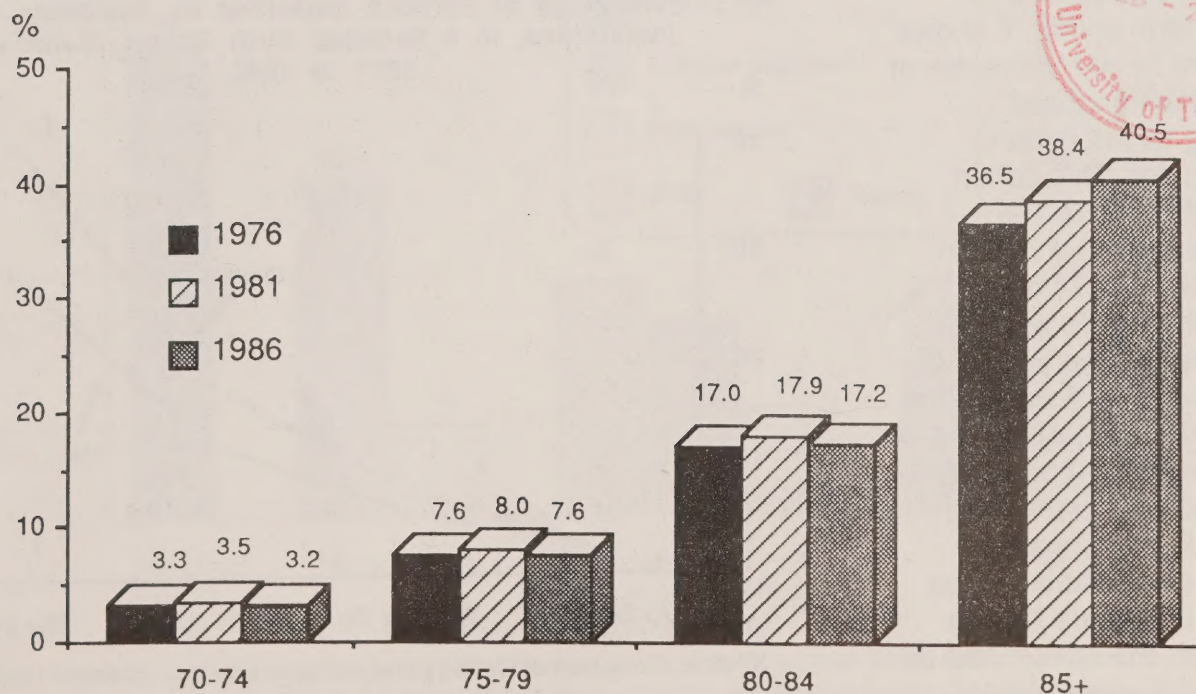
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## ***The rate of institutionalization of the elderly in Canada is declining for those below the age of 85***

- The proportion of seniors less than 85 years old who were classified as residents of institutions, such as nursing homes and old age homes, has fallen slightly from the 1981 to 1986 Censuses. The proportion above age 85 has increased slightly in each of the last two five-year periods ending with the 1986 Census of Canada. Both females and males have shown this pattern of change.

- In some provinces, notably Manitoba and British Columbia, the proportion of seniors above 85 years of age who were classified in the census as being residents of institutions remained stable or barely increased from the 1981 to 1986 Censuses. Among the factors that help to explain these trends is the recent sharp fall in mortality rates at the oldest ages, which has helped to keep older families intact longer than was previously the case.

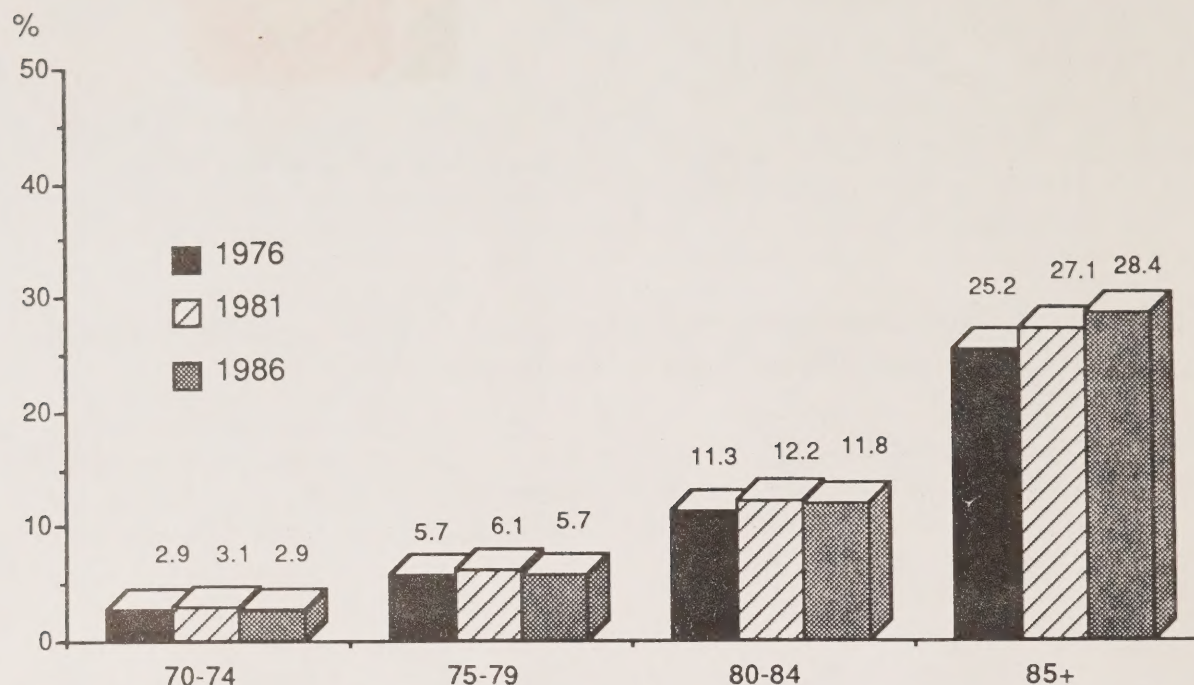
**Percentage of Women Classified as Residents of Institutions, for Selected Age Groups, Canada, 1976, 1981 and 1986**



Source: Censuses of Canada.



## Percentage of Men Classified as Residents of Institutions, for Selected Age Groups, Canada, 1976, 1981 and 1986



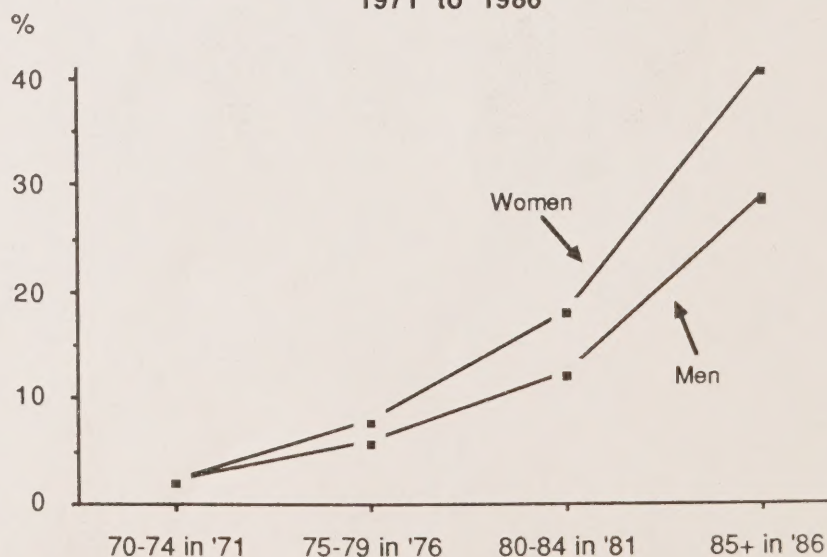
Source: Censuses of Canada.

### Pattern of Increasing Risk of Institutionalization Within a Single Cohort

Each curve in the graph below represents one five-year birth cohort. It shows the pattern by which the risk of being institutionalized increased as the cohort became older. This cohort was aged 60-64 in 1961 -- they were aged 0-4 in 1901. At the age of 70-74 about 3% of that cohort were residents of institutions. Five years later about 5% had that status. Ten years later (1981) over 10% of that same group (born in the five-year period just before the 1901 Census) were residents of institutions. Just another FIVE years later in 1986, when the cohort had all

reached the age of 85 (or more), about one-third were residents of institutions. Of course, over that time period many members of the cohort had passed away.

### Percentage of Persons Classified as Residents of Institutions, in a Selected Birth Cohort, Canada, 1971 to 1986



Source: Censuses of Canada and estimates by L.O. Stone.



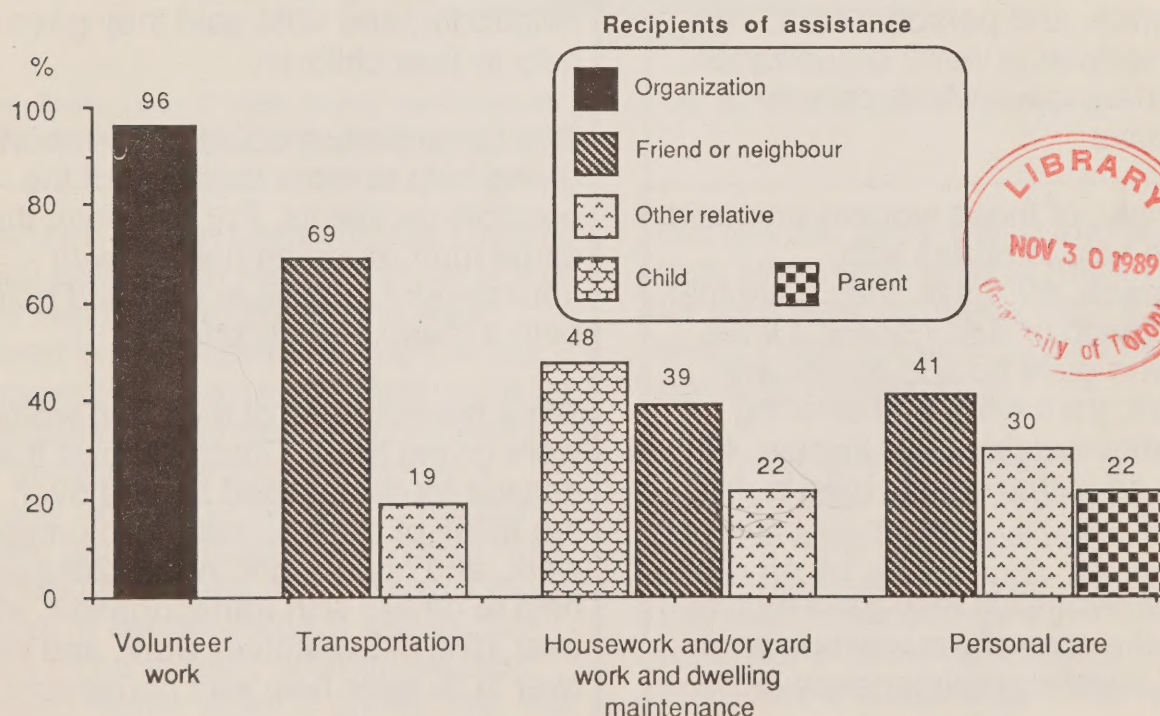
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## Canada's seniors are important contributors to their communities

Most research about support and seniors focuses on the support **given** to older persons by other, usually younger, persons. A consequence of this focus is an inaccurate exaggeration of seniors' dependency and an undeserved portrayal of older persons as a burden to their families.

Charts 1 and 2 deal with help given **by** seniors in just four of many possible areas of community concern. The charts refer to those seniors who said they gave help to others who were not living with them. These charts show the primary recipients of such help with regard to volunteer work, transportation,

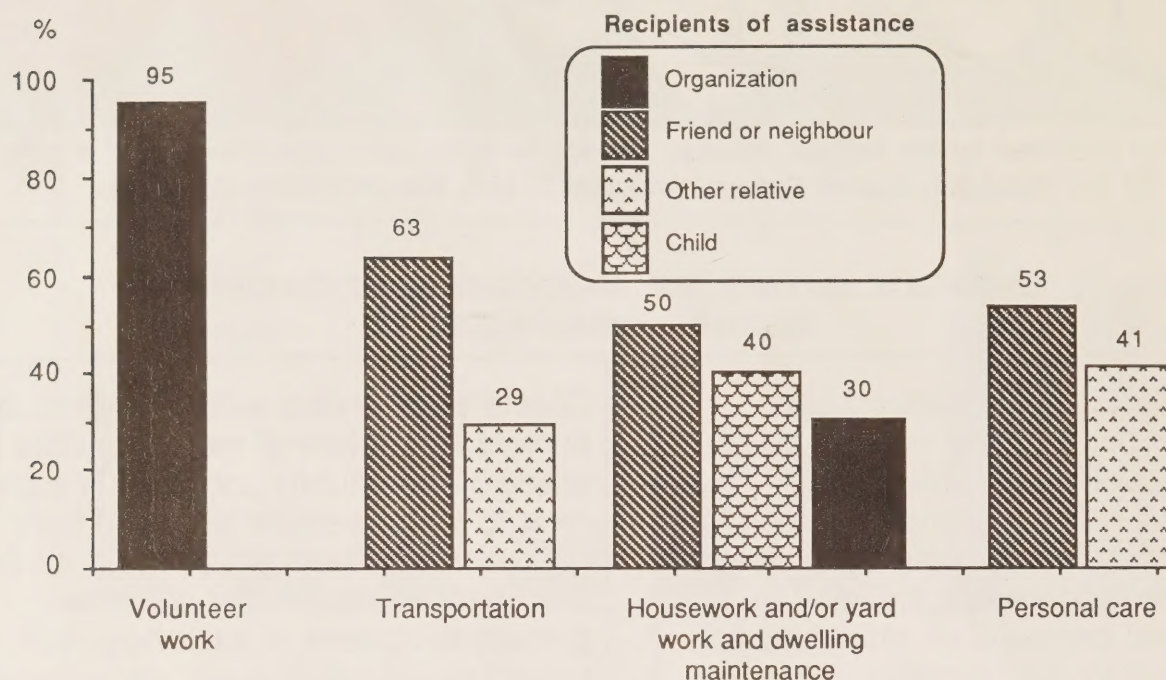
**Chart 1. Most Frequently Cited Recipients of Selected Types of Assistance from Women Aged 65 and Over, Canada, 1985 General Social Survey**  
(Only recipients that did not reside with the respondent)



**Source:** Connidis, Ingrid Arnet. February 1989. "Report on Seniors' Volunteer Work and Unpaid Help to Others". Paper commissioned by the National Advisory Council on Aging for the Symposium on Social Supports, March 28 and 29, 1989. Ottawa.



**Chart 2. Most Frequently Cited Recipients of Selected Types of Assistance from Men Aged 65 and Over, Canada, 1985 General Social Survey**  
(Only recipients that did not reside with the respondent)



Source: See page 1.

housework, yard work and dwelling maintenance, and personal care. The possible recipients were: organization, friend or neighbour, child, parent, or other relative.

For example, of those women who said they gave help to others with transportation, 69% said they gave that help to a friend or a neighbour. Of the women who gave help to others with housework, yard work and dwelling maintenance outside their homes, 48% said they gave that kind of help to their children.

Of the men who said they gave help to others in the area of housework, yard work and dwelling maintenance, 50%

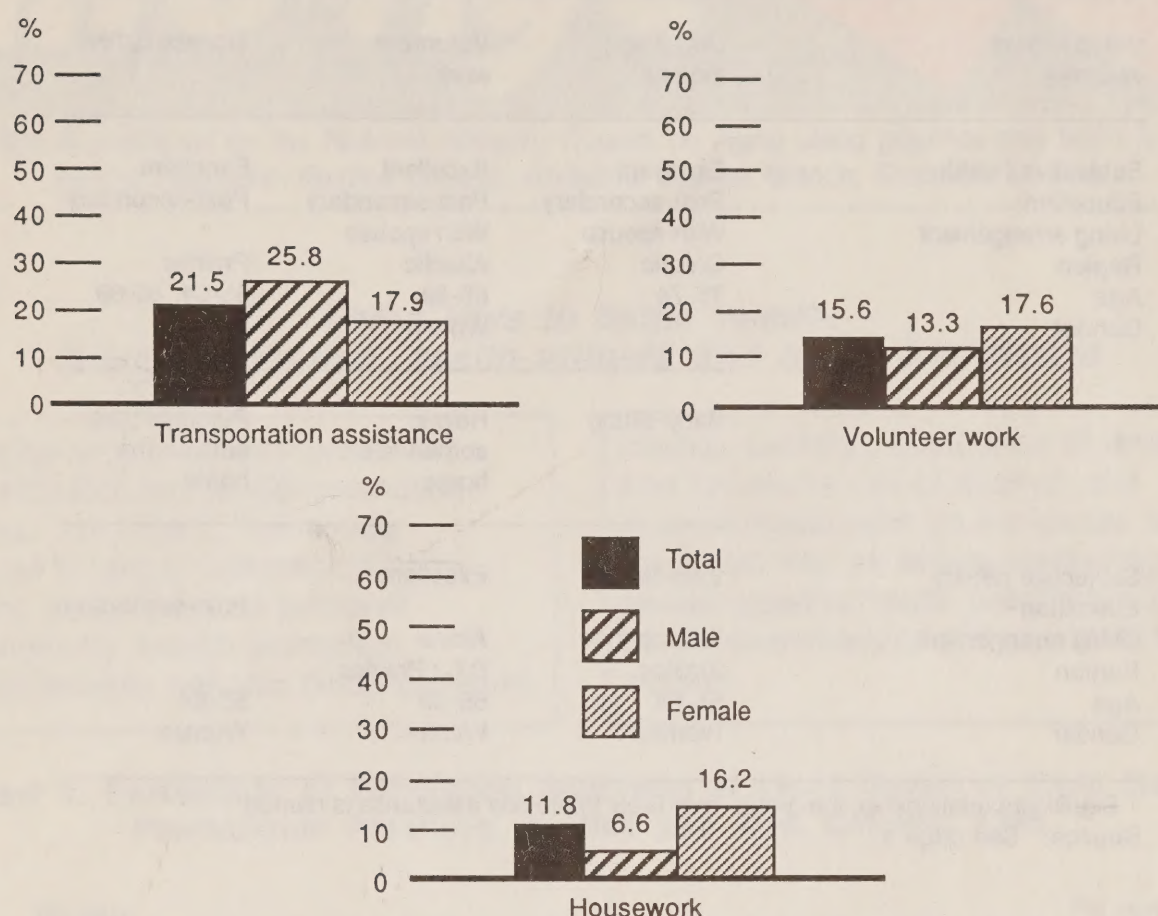
reported giving such help to a friend or neighbour, and 40% said they gave that help to their children.

The same person could have reported giving help to more than one of the possible recipients. For example, the same man reporting helping with housework could have reported helping both a friend and his children.

What percentages of men and women were giving help? Chart 3 shows the answer for those aged 55 and over, in the fields of transportation, volunteer work, and housework. About 20% gave help to others with transportation, while over 15% did volunteer work, and just over 10% gave help with housework.



**Chart 3. Percentage of Respondents Who Gave Selected Types of Help in the Six Months Preceding the General Social Survey, Persons Aged 55 and Over, by Sex, Canada, 1985**



**Source:** Stone, Leroy O. 1988. *Family and Friendship Ties Among Canada's Seniors*. Statistics Canada Catalogue 89-508. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Older men and women differed sharply in their patterns of help-giving for five of the seven fields of giving that were covered in the General Social Survey, the exceptions being volunteer work for organizations and donation of money. The gender differences seem to strongly reflect the ways in which our society tends to differentiate boys from girls (and later men from women) with respect to certain cultural values and norms of behaviour. Women showed distinctly higher rates of giving help with

housework, baby-sitting and personal care when compared to men. The rates for men were markedly higher for help given in transportation, yard work and dwelling maintenance.

In almost all of the areas of giving surveyed, the rates for older men and women were highest either in the 55-59 or the 60-64 age groups. Beyond 60-64 the rates tended to go downward as age rose. For most of the classes of help, there was a steep drop in the rate of



**Table 1. Summary of Characteristics Associated with Greatest Likelihood of Providing Assistance,<sup>1</sup> Persons Aged 55 and Over, Canada, 1985 General Social Survey**

Independent variables	Donating money	Volunteer work	Transportation
Subjective health	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Education	Post-secondary	Post-secondary	Post-secondary
Living arrangement	With spouse	With spouse	
Region	Ontario	Atlantic	Prairies
Age	70-74	65-69	55-64, 65-69
Gender		Women	Men
	Baby-sitting	Help in someone's home	Personal care outside the home
Subjective health	Excellent	Excellent	
Education			Post-secondary
Living arrangement	With spouse	Alone	
Region	Prairies	B.C.; Prairies	
Age	55-64	65-69	55-64
Gender	Women	Women	Women

<sup>1</sup> Significant relationship; the group most likely to provide assistance is named.

Source: See page 1.

giving assistance between the average for the age group 65-69 and that for the age group 70-79.

What factors were most likely to be associated with help-giving by older Canadians? Table 1 offers some tentative answers. Factors which affect the likelihood that older persons (aged 55 and over) will provide different types

of assistance include subjective health, age, living arrangements (closely related to marital status), gender, education, and region. Table 1 indicates that those in excellent health, with a post-secondary education, living with a spouse, aged 65 to 69, women, and those residing in the Prairies are most likely to provide most forms of help.



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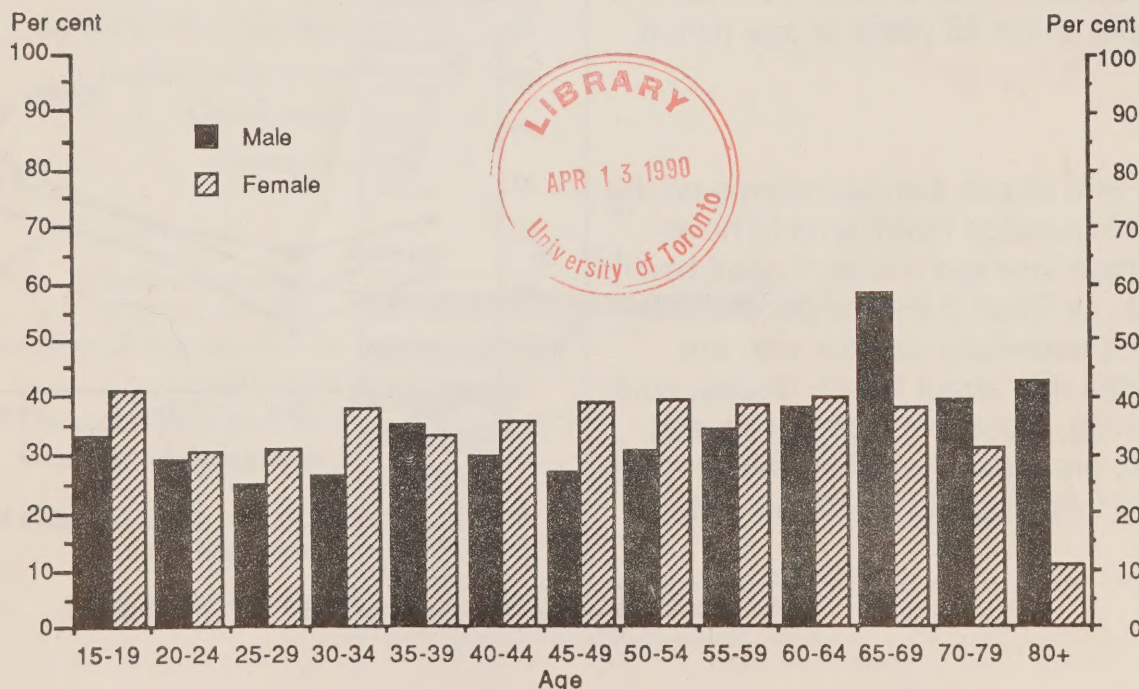
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## **Three keys to better health: health promotion, health attitude and health knowledge**

Knowledge of good health practices, health attitudes and health promotion behaviour are linked. These may contribute to longer retention of body functions and enhanced personal independence. Health promotion practices include periodic blood pressure

checks, exercise, avoidance of smoking and excessive use of alcohol, diet improvements such as avoidance of saturated fats, as well as observing other gender specific health practices such as breast examinations and pap tests for women.

**Chart 1. Percentage of Population Reporting at Least Seven of Eight Health Promotional Practices, by Sex and Age, Canada, 1985**



Source: Statistics Canada, 1985, Canada's Health Promotion Survey, microdata file.



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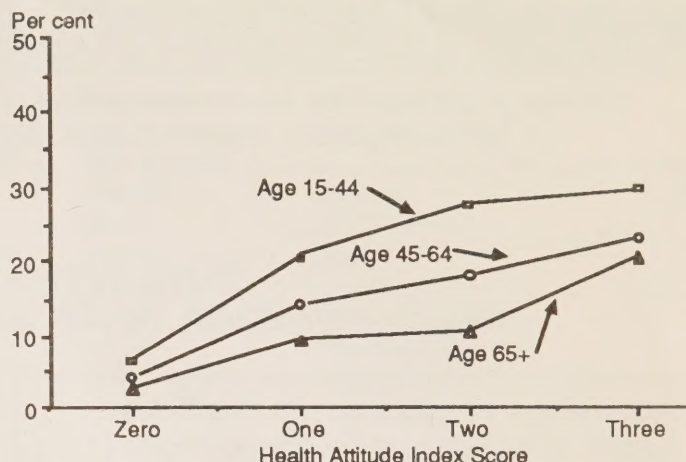


Chart 1 shows that the percentage of people involved in good health promotion practices tends to range between 30% to 40% among the 15-19 to 70-79 age groups. Among men there is a very gradual rise in this percentage from age 45-49 to age 65-69. Women tend to report higher rates of pursuing good health promotion practices than men up to the age of 65. Above age 65 men report slightly higher rates than women, whose rates drop steadily after the 60-64 age group. The meaning of this difference is beclouded by the fact that after age 65 rising percentages of women live alone.

A strong positive health attitude is associated with a greater than average chance of having very good knowledge about health practices. Groups with greater than average levels on the Health Attitude Index are more likely to score highly on the measure of health knowledge than those with less positive health attitudes. This is most noticeable for people under 45 years of age (Chart 2).

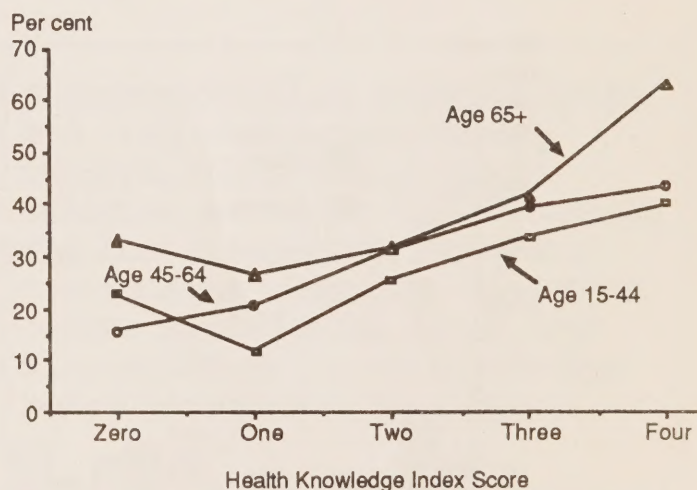
People with above average scores on the Health Knowledge Index tend to have higher than average levels of good health practice. As Chart 3 shows, people of all ages and especially seniors who are knowledgeable about health issues, such as smoking, blood pressure levels and nutrition, are more likely than others to be applying this knowledge in their daily lives.

**Chart 2. Percentage of Population with Highest Score on Health Knowledge Index, by Score on Health Attitude Index, by Age, Canada, 1985**



**Source:** Statistics Canada, 1985, Canada's Health Promotion Survey, microdata file.

**Chart 3. Percentage of Population with at Least Seven of Eight Health Promotional Practices, by Score on Health Knowledge Index, by Age, Canada, 1985**



**Source:** Statistics Canada, 1985, Canada's Health Promotion Survey, microdata file.



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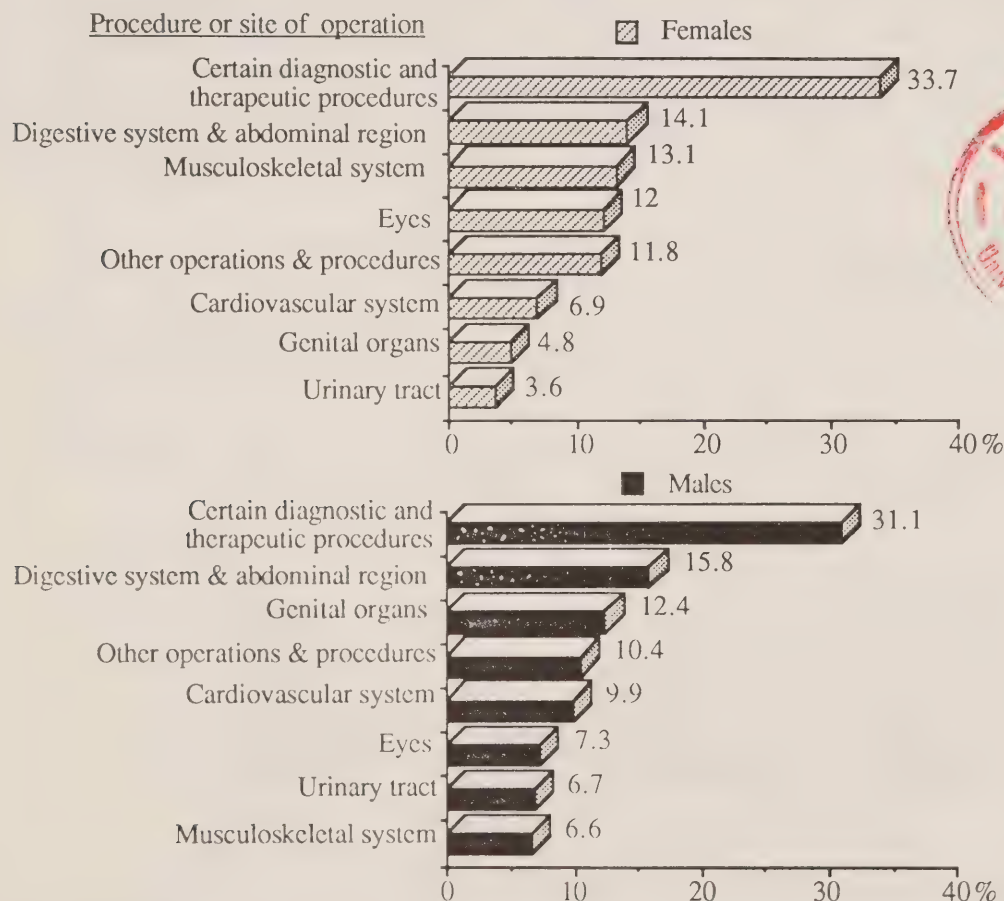
## *Seniors are different in the pattern of health services they receive.*

A substantial percentage of Canada's seniors received health services that included surgical procedures, particularly diagnostic and therapeutic procedures and operations on the digestive system and the abdominal region, during

1985-86. Next most frequent for men were operations on the genital organs, while for women, it was operations on the musculoskeletal system.

A high percentage of General Social Survey respondents aged 55 or more

**Chart 1. Percentage of Hospital Separations that Involved Surgical Procedures, Persons Aged 65 and Over, by Type of Procedure and Sex, Canada, 1985-86**



Source: Statistics Canada. *A Portrait of Seniors in Canada*. Cat. 89-519. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, September 1990. (\$43 in Canada - national toll free order line 1-800-267-6677.)



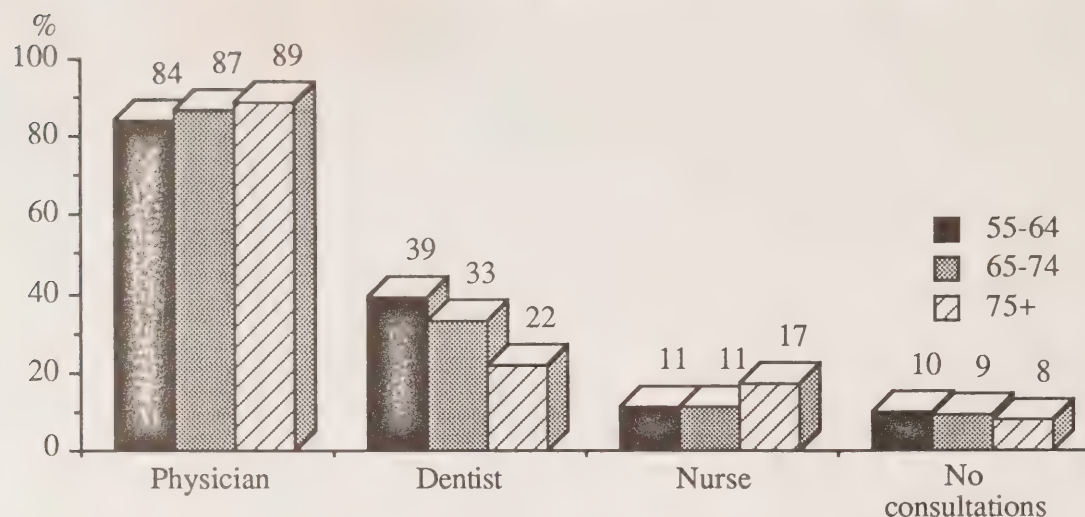
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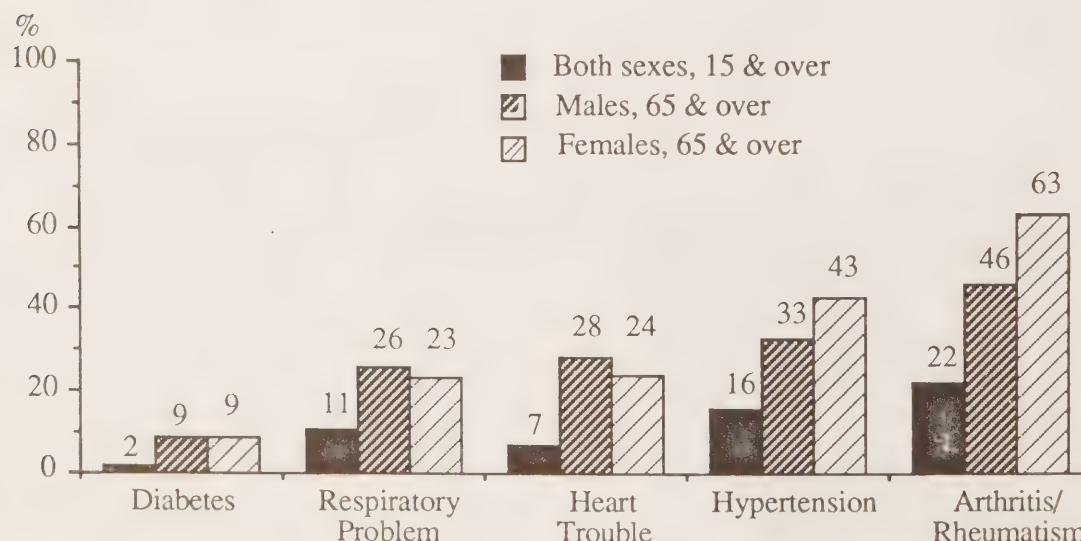
**Chart 2. Percentage Reporting Consultations with Health Professionals, by Type of Professional and Age Group, Canada, 1985**



reported that they consulted a health service professional, especially a physician, in the year before the survey. About 90% of seniors aged 75 and over consulted a physician, but the proportions consulting dentists were much lower, at 33% of persons aged 65 to 74, and only 22% of those 75 and over.

These consultations were associated with health problems that had a particular pattern among seniors. Compared with the total population, persons aged 65 and over in 1985, were at least twice as likely to report respiratory problems, arthritis or rheumatism and hypertension, and at least three times as likely to report heart trouble.

**Chart 3. Percentage Reporting They Had Selected Health Problems, by Age Group and Sex, Canada, 1985**



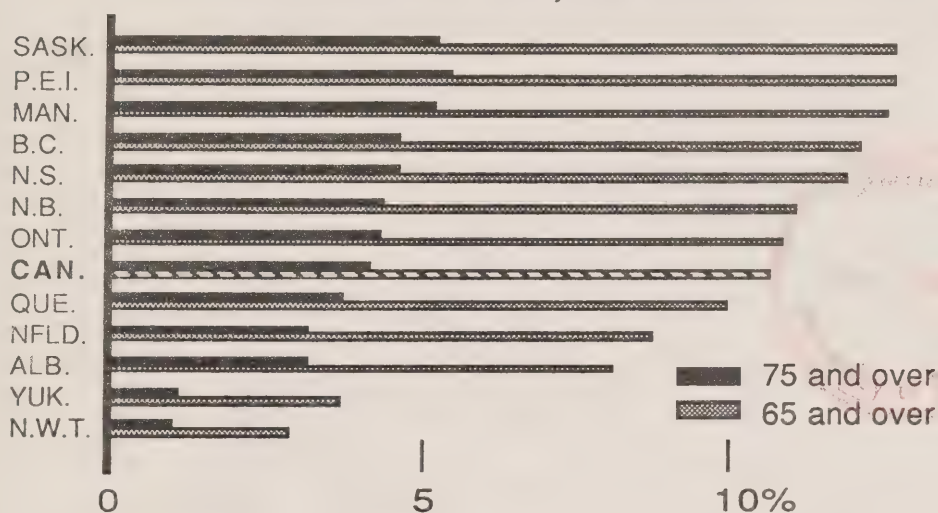
*A Portrait of Seniors in Canada* was produced by Target Groups Project, Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.



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## Provincial and international perspectives on senior populations

**Per cent of Population Aged 65 and over and 75 and over, 1986**

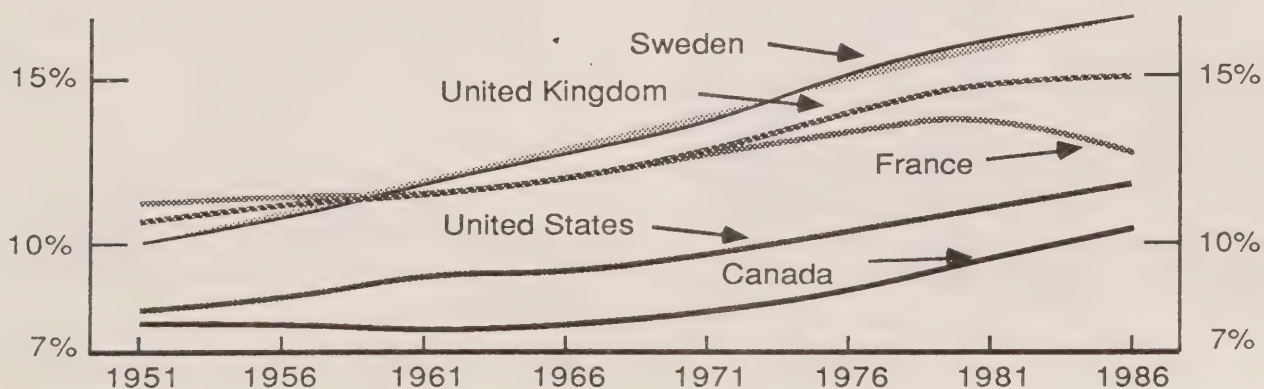


- Canadians aged 65 and over numbered 2.7 million (11% of the total population) in the 1986 Census.

- In 1986 just over 4% of Canadians were aged 75 and over. Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and Manitoba led with over 5%.

- Two out of every five seniors were at least 75 years of age in 1986.

**Per cent of Population Aged 65 and Over, 1951 to 1986**



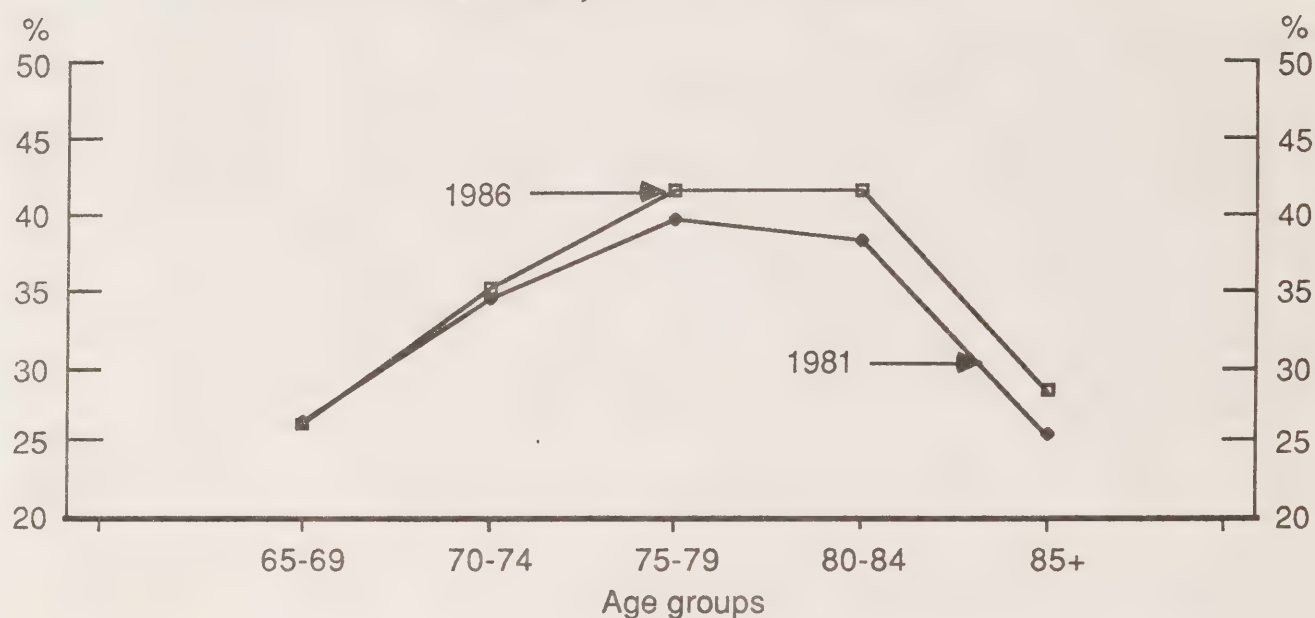
- Canada's percentage of seniors still remains well below those of some other developed countries.



- *Aging is a lifelong process.*
- *Aging is both a personal and societal experience.*
- *Aging is everybody's business.*

- Nearly three out of every five Canadian seniors are women. In the 1986 Census, there were 83 men for every 100 women aged 65-69, and there were only 44 men per 100 women aged 85 and over.

**Per cent of All Women Living Alone, Selected Age Groups, Canada, 1981 and 1986**



- The chances of living alone are much greater among older women than among older men, particularly at the upper ages. Among those in the age group 65 to 69, one out of every four women was living alone in 1986, while just one out of nine men did so. Due in part to the higher death rates of men, the percentage of women living alone rises up to about age 85; after which it begins to fall as increasing numbers enter institutions.
- Among those aged 80 and over, nearly two thirds of the women either lived alone or in institutions, whereas little more than one third of the men lived by themselves or in an institution.
- During the five-year period from 1981 to 1986 the percentage of seniors under age 85 who were living alone increased.



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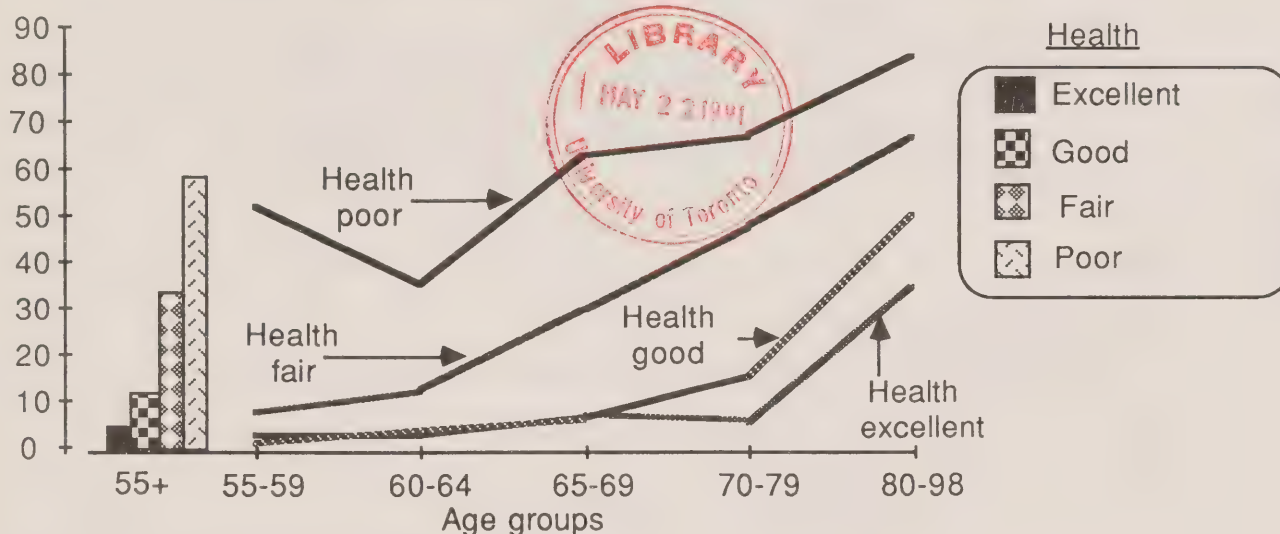
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*"We live in interdependence with family, neighbours and friends ..."*

**Chart 1: Percentage who Reported they Could Not Manage Without Help With Grocery Shopping, by Level of Health and Age, Canada, 1985**  
(For only those who reported getting some help with grocery shopping)



Source: 1985 General Social Survey, Statistics Canada

*Interdependence*, "both giving and receiving practical and material aid, information and emotional support" is normal. Chart 1, which deals only with people who said they got help with grocery shopping, illustrates how the availability of support can become more important for those who are approaching advanced age. The same is true for those with deteriorating health, regardless of their age.

Chart 1 suggests that as age rises over the stated age groups, from 55-59 to 80-98,

there is a gradual increase in the percentage of persons who reported they needed help with grocery shopping. The increase is particularly notable after the age of 80. However, those reporting good health at age 80-98 had a **lower** percentage needing help with grocery shopping than those with poor health at age 55-59. This suggests that the successful pursuit of a healthy body and mind may be more important than sheer aging in determining how dependent you will become in your later years.



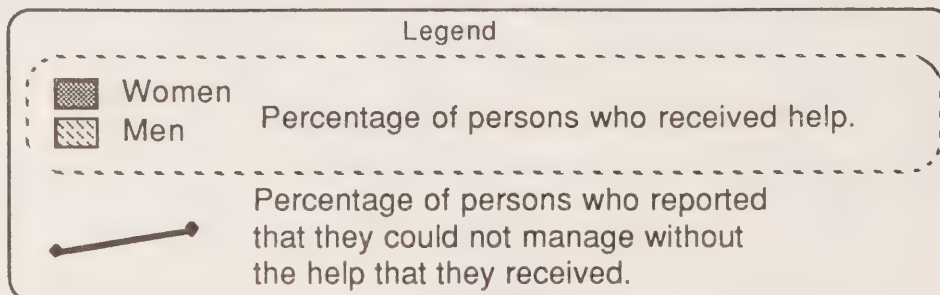
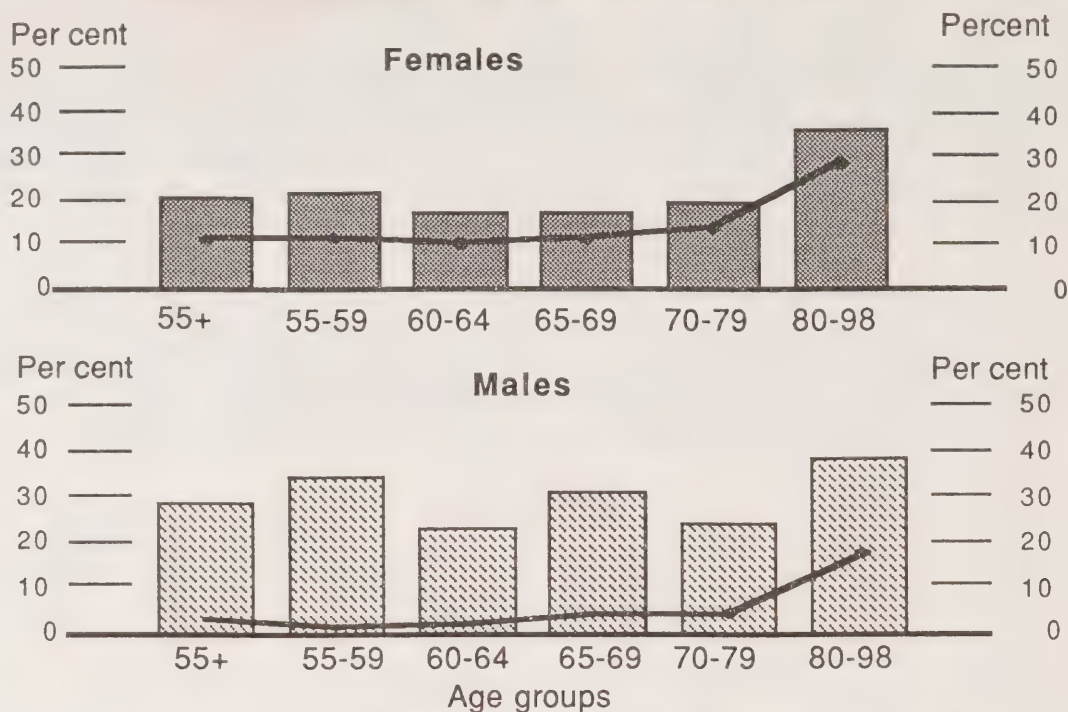
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**Chart 2: Percentage of Survey Respondents Who Received Help with Grocery Shopping, by Sex and Age, Canada, 1985**



Source: 1985 General Social Survey. Also see Leroy O. Stone, *Family and Friendship Ties among Canada's Seniors*. Statistics Canada Catalogue 89-508. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1988.

Needing help with grocery shopping is a useful indicator of assistance needed with a variety of kinds of mobility.

Below age 80, about 20% of older women and 25% of older men reported they got help with grocery shopping. The bars in Chart 2 show these percentages for each of the selected age groups, while the solid line

shows the percentage of all persons who said they could not manage without the help that they received. The higher percentages of men who got help reflect our culture and the greater proportions who are married among the men. The percentage getting help among women remains low, at nearly 20%, until age 80 is reached.

For more information about the data presented above contact Family and Community Support Systems Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6. (613) 951-9753. To voice your interests or concerns write to the National Advisory Council on Aging, Room 340, Brooke Claxton Bldg., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0K9. (613) 957-1968.  
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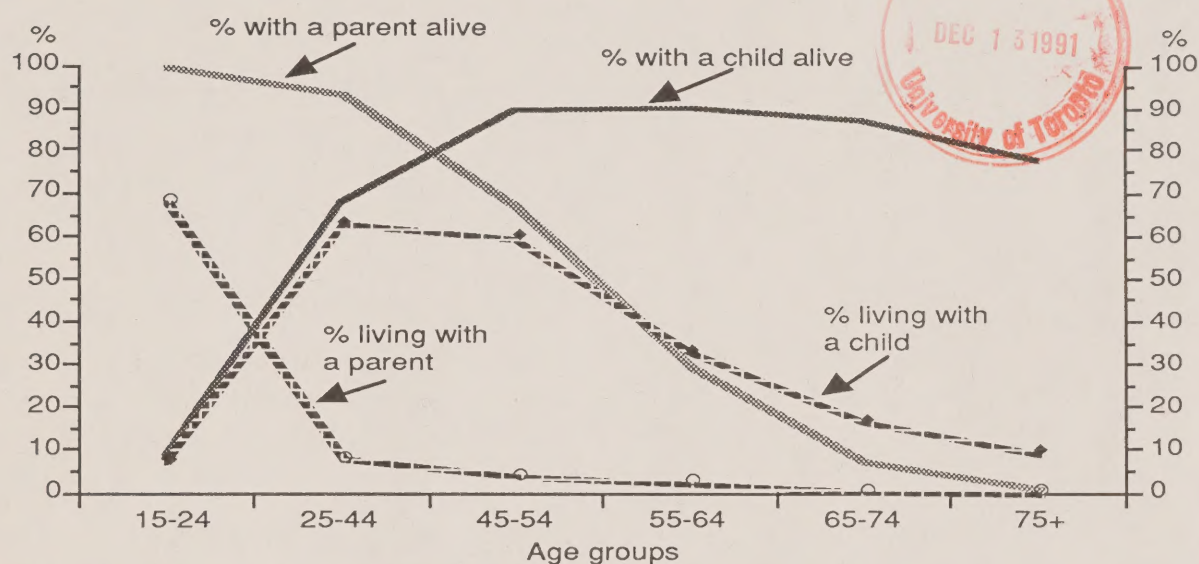
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## "Parents not only get help from their adult children -- they also give help"

Chart 1. Percentage who Had Parents or Children Alive and who Lived with Them, by Age, Canada, 1990



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey 1990.

When we receive a gift, we often feel a need to give something back in exchange for the gift. Sociologists call this the "norm of reciprocity". The popular imagery of seniors gives scant attention to the norm of reciprocity -- seniors are often portrayed as only receiving help from others, and we often read about the "burden" upon children from caring for needy parents. Charts 1 and 2 provide some basis for challenging this "popular wisdom".

In viewing these charts, we need to be careful to avoid making any direct comparison of percentages giving help to parents with

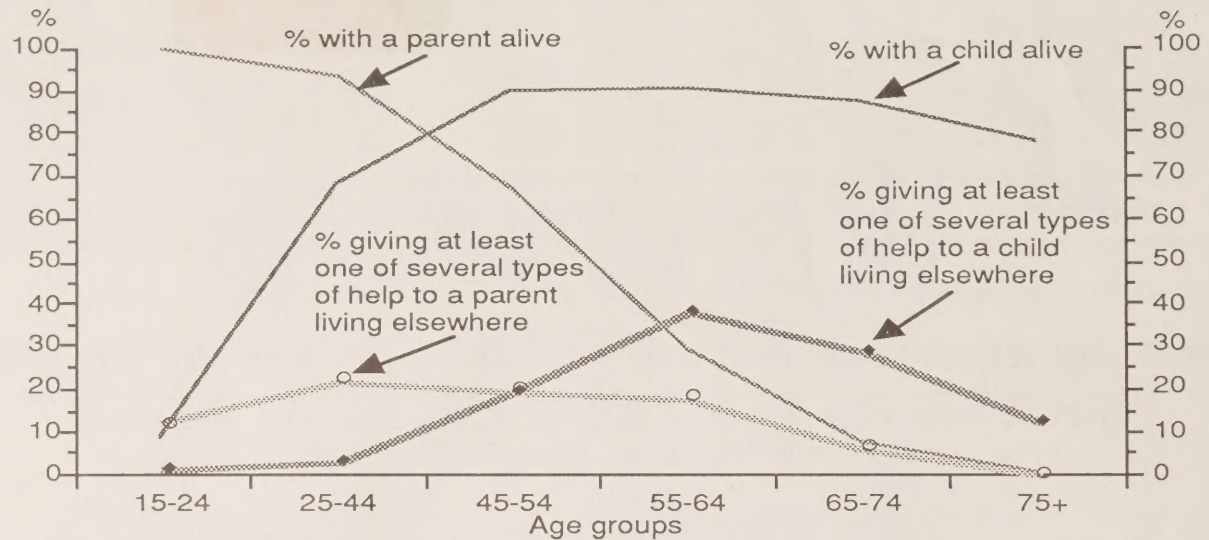
percentages giving help to children. The possibility of giving help is affected by the number of available parents (or children, as the case may be). That is why these two charts begin with information about the percentages (for different age groups) who have parents (or children) alive. (We should also take into account the average number of children, or parents, alive per person, as well as the proximity of the parents and children; but that becomes too complex for the present purposes.)

Chart 1 shows that the chances of having a parent alive begin falling markedly after age 45. In the



**Chart 2. Percentage Giving Selected Help to Parents and to Children, by Age, Canada, 1990**

(Omits persons who have no parents, or children, to help)



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey 1990.

45-54 age group only about 60% of Canadians had a parent alive in 1990. Beyond age 54, the percentage with a parent alive falls sharply. In contrast, the percentage with a child alive is above 75% for all age groups beyond age 44. If we assume that the potential of having a burdensome parent may be greatest for those who live with a parent, then Chart 1 shows that the age group 25-44 has the greatest exposure to that potential among ages where young children are also likely to be in the home. But only 8% of those aged 25-44 had a parent in their home. Among those aged 25-44 who had a parent in the home and who were rated (in another analysis done in Statistics Canada's Family and Community Support Systems Division) as having a high level of activity in both supporting close family and having attachment to paid work, it was found that over 80% reported they received help from a parent with meal preparation or daily house maintenance.

Among those with a parent alive, the percentage who gave at least one of several kinds of help to a parent who lived elsewhere is greatest in the 25-44 age group -- 20%. [The kinds of help

measured included meal preparation, household cleaning and laundry, yard work and building maintenance, transportation, child care, financial help, and personal care (bathing, dressing, etc.).] The figure remains close to 20% from age 45 to age 64.

Among those with children alive, the percentage who gave at least one of several kinds of help to a child who lived elsewhere is greatest in the 55-64 age group -- 35%. The figure is above 20% in each of the 45-54 and 65-74 age groups. Nearly 30% of persons aged 65-74 gave at least one of the measured kinds of help to a child, and even in the 75-and-over age group the figure was above 10%.

Although we must not compare these percentages helping children with those regarding help to parents, we may be in a world where for every unusually burdensome senior parent there is another senior parent who is no more burdensome than is normal for human beings that have the usual obligations that go with mutual caring, and, instead, is a distinct helper to her/his children!







